



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA URGING THE FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION TO ENHANCE ITS REGULATIONS FOR ELK MANAGEMENT AND SHOULDER SEASONS.

WHEREAS, in 2018, 64.5% of the elk management units with an established population objective were over objective; and

WHEREAS, hunters are the best and most cost-effective management tool to maintain elk populations at objective; and

WHEREAS, many Montana families rely on hunting opportunities for subsistence; and

WHEREAS, food banks in Montana rely on donations of game meat from hunters who are able to share their harvest; and

WHEREAS, increasing hunter opportunities on private lands in management units where populations are over objective is important for reducing game damage on private property, moving elk toward population objectives, building and improving relationships between landowners and hunters, and helping to disperse elk onto public lands; and

WHEREAS, there are changes the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission could make to elk management and shoulder season regulations to enhance these outcomes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the 66th Legislature of the State of Montana urges the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission to enhance elk management and shoulder season regulations by:

- (1) opening performance-based shoulder seasons in hunting districts where elk populations are above objective on August 15 and closing them no earlier than the second Sunday in February;
- (2) including public lands adjacent to private lands enrolled in a shoulder season;
- (3) publishing a list of landowners participating in a shoulder season;

(4) allowing general elk licenses to be used to harvest antlerless elk during shoulder seasons and providing liberal numbers of antlerless elk B tags and opportunities to acquire those tags in hunting districts that are over objective;

(5) allowing hunters to purchase multiple antlerless elk B tags, subject to any statutory limit, to maximize the number of hunters that may harvest multiple elk during a shoulder season;

(6) updating the 2005 elk management plan to incorporate contemporary elk management data, tools, and regulations;

(7) completing the evaluation of performance-based elk shoulder seasons and making necessary adaptive changes to facilitate managing elk populations at objective;

(8) simplifying regulations and making them consistent across hunting districts as much as possible, including elk shoulder season dates; and

(9) working with landowners to support access to elk during hunting seasons and developing tools in response to landowner needs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State send copies of this resolution to each member of the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission and the director of the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within joint resolution,
HJ 0018, originated in the House.

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2019.

Chief Clerk of the House

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2019.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 18

INTRODUCED BY W. GALT, D. BARTEL, D. BEDEY, S. BERGLEE, M. BLASDEL, K. BOGNER, B. BROWN,
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